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Park and Recreation Commission 11-8-11

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, November 8, 2011

Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7:10 PM on the first floor of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, November 8, 2011.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Don Vitters, Shirley Canniff and Jim Robillard. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly.

Members of the public included: Paul Carroll, Andrew Leonard and Jeannie Leary

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Canniff motioned to approve Minutes of the October 11, 2011 Meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0 by the Commission.

Open Forum – Public Comments

Ms. Leary thanked the Recreation Department for repairing the belts on the cooling tower that were making a loud noise. Ms. Leary is also happy that the weeds were taken care of.

Ms. Leary asked Babe Ruth to support a port-a-potty at Summer Street field. Ms. Leary stated people are urinating in the toddler area of the multi generational area. They also do not want anybody running on the field while a game is in progress and ask that signage be posted.

The Commission stressed their concern with the rotted bleachers at Summer Street. Mr. Connelly will ask DPW to take a look at it.

Mr. Connelly received a request to replace the flag at Buzzell Field.

Buck Field Renovation Review

Mr. Connelly reviewed written specifications with the contractor. Specifications included dugout area details, signage, landscaping and outfield.

Mr. Connelly stated that the project is moving right along. They are not at final grade yet but that should be completed shortly. The fencing is down and temporary fencing is installed. Irrigation will begin next week. It will take a couple of weeks to prepare the area for sod.

Mr. Leonard talked in detail about the dugouts. The dugouts will be enclosed with a rough concrete block back wall; sidewalls will be chain link to allow visibility into the dugouts for policing efforts. The roof will be 6'8" high in back and 7'6" in front. The benches will be open mesh, hard plastic, vinyl coated. There will be a decorative wall connecting to the backstop. This will be 24" high and will be the same material as dugouts with a rough surface. The wall is strictly ornamental and not intended as a seating

area. There will be no entrance to the field around the backstop.

Mr. Leonard stated that they will be adding 5 foot extensions on the existing posts extending over the left field boundary so that the outfield netting can be raised. The landscaping details will be presented in the spring. The weeds will be cleaned up, but no major tree removal will be done.

Mr. Connelly stressed the importance of drainage.

Ms. Mayer asked if there was anything planned for cleanup by the storage shed. It is full of trash and not very attractive. Also, the wooden covers on the infield mix storage are rotting. Mr. Leonard said there was no discussion, but there will be some general cleanup.

Mr. Vitters stated his concern with the scoreboard height. Mr. Leonard stated that final scoreboard details will be submitted with the spring phase along with landscaping details.

The light shields were ordered. They were \$75/each, 28 lights in total. They will take 2 to 3 weeks to come in.

Ms. Leary stated her concern with graffiti on the dugouts. Mr. Leonard said that there are coatings that can be applied. Ms. Mayer mentioned the possibility of a mural down the road, if necessary.

Mr. Vitters asked that more information and specification be provided for review concerning the dugouts.

The Commission agreed to approve the dugouts, decorative wall, netting and height of the outfield fence. The landscaping, signage and scoreboard will be presented in Phase 2 in the spring and will not be worked on until the details are reviewed and approved.

A motion to approve the initial phase of work was made by Mr. Robillard, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0 by the Commission.

Article 36 One Year Commission Review

The Public Meeting was held on October 27th. The top six issues were discussed and Mr. Connelly's recommendations are noted:

- **Menotomy Rocks Park – Off-leash dogs in woods and at non-off leash times.** Animal Control and Officer Flynn will step up patrols. More tickets will be given out, and since the fine amounts have increased significantly the Commission hopes that this will be a further deterrent to scofflaws. Mr. Connelly recommends leaving the woods off limits to unleashed dogs.
- **Robbins Farm – Limit the number of dogs and identify different locations for the program.** Mr. Connelly does not feel the number of dogs is an issue. Sign language needs to be clarified to indicate that the entire park (except the playground area) is available for use during off-leash hours and that the field is off-limits only when a school dept. or permitted event is present.
- **McClennen Park – Use of baseball field by off-leash dogs.** Fenced baseball fields should be off limits. They are not designed or built for the high impact of confined off-leash dog activity. A fenced off-leash recreation area is being built at Thorndike Field and other locations will be considered for the future, but youth baseball fields should not be used.
- **Review of 7:30AM to 8:30AM limitation to morning hours at Robbins Farm.** Mr. Connelly spoke with the police department and they recommend no change, as it is working well. Talks about any compromise should include Mr. Connelly, PRC, APD, an off-leash advocate and Safe Routes to School representative together – serial discussions are not proving helpful.
- **Increased signage at all parks.** Mr. Connelly recommends permanent signage at each facility. Mr. Connelly will price out signs. Signage will start at the baseball fields and playgrounds.

In addition, there was one known bite incident that was not noted on the report provided by APD. Mr. Connelly called Captain

Flynn. He was not sure why it was not on the report, but will investigate.

Ms. Canniff motioned to approve Mr. Connelly's recommendations for Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 5 with Number 4 to be further investigated. Mr. Vitters seconded and it was approved by the Commission 4-0.

Capital Improvement Project Update

Wellington Tennis Courts – Mr. Connelly stated that the project is virtually done. Some minor punchlist items remain. There is still an issue with the drainage in the park by the Prentiss St. entrance, but this area was not part of the tennis court renovation project and is not related to the work that was done. Though they have already seen some use, the courts will officially open next spring.

Robbins Farm Slide – Mr. Connelly stated that there was a holdup with the manufacturer and the project is two pieces short. Mr. Connelly stated the project should be complete in about a week.

North Union Basketball Courts – No Update.

Thorndike Field OLRA Update – Mr. Connelly has received \$179,000 for the project. Preparation work will begin this fall with completion next spring. Mr. Connelly has sent around information to the OLRA Task Force to begin the discussion about recommendations for policies and rules of use.

2013 Request Review – Mr. Connelly met with members of the Capital Planning Committee and went over requests. He felt confident that we will get \$31,000 to be used for repair projects beyond standard DPW maintenance. Mr. Connelly briefly discussed the Florence Ave. Playground project.

Mr. Connelly mentioned the request for a boat ramp at the Reservoir. While harvesting water chestnuts, the heavy machinery used damaged the shoreline. A boat ramp would alleviate this problem, provide a recreational access point and help prevent erosion in this area. Mr. Connelly received a quote from Heimlich for \$12,500 to do the job, and while there is currently no available funding in any departmental budget, the Mystic Watershed Association has grants which he has applied for.

An email complaint was received regarding a broken bench at Magnolia. This bench will be replaced.

Special Requests

A special request was made for the annual X-country Thanksgiving race at the Reservoir. The event has been held for several years without incident or complaint. Mr. Robillard motioned to approve, seconded by Ms. Canniff and approved 4-0 by the Commission.

Rink and Recreation Update

Mr. Connelly stated that everything is going well at the rink.

Mr. Connelly stated that the recreation programs are going well. Enrollment in the skating program seems slower than last year. Mr. Connelly stated a winter supplement of programs is in the works. Mr. Connelly also mentioned that the department is investigating switching to a new software program called Myrec.com for on-line registrations. The current software program Webtrac is not user friendly.

Committee Updates:

Portable Restrooms – Mr. Connelly to schedule a port-a-potty meeting.

Friends of Parks – N/A

Skateboard Park – A complaint came in about rats living in the tot area at McClennen. This is being investigated by multiple departments.

Mill Brook Linear Park – N/A

Other Business

None

Mr. Robillard motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Mayer, and approved 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:
Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation